

REMARKS

Applicants submit this Amendment After Final in reply to the Final Office Action mailed September 11, 2007 and the Advisory Action mailed December 27, 2007. In the Final Office Action, the Examiner allowed claims 97, 105, 106, 112, and 115-127; rejected claims 80, 82, 84-96, 98-104, 107-111, and 113-114 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,788,224 to Platt ("Platt '224") in view of U.S. Patent Application No. 2005/0127346 to Steffes ("Steffes"); and rejected claim 83 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Platt '224 in view of Steffes and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,698,726 to Platt ("Platt '726"). In the Advisory Action, the Examiner upheld the rejection of claims 80, 82, 84-96, 98-104, 107-111, and 113-114 based on Platt '224 in view of Steffes.

As an initial matter, and as discussed in the Request for Reconsideration filed on December 11, 2007, Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's allowance of claims 97, 105, 106, 112, and 115-127. As Applicants pointed out in the Request for Reconsideration, however, there was an apparent discrepancy in the Final Office Action regarding claim 115. On the Office Action Summary page, the Examiner indicates that claims 97, 105, 106, 112, and 115-127 are allowed. On page 7 of the Final Office Action, however, the Examiner indicates that "[c]laims 97, 105-106, 112, and 116-127 are allowed," omitting claim 115. Claim 115, however, is not rejected on any basis anywhere in the Final Office Action. Moreover, claim 115 is not identified in the Advisory Action as a one of the claims rejected on the basis of Platt '224 in view of Steffes. Accordingly, for the purpose of this Amendment Applicants treat claim 115 as having been allowed by the examiner, as noted on the Office Action Summary page.

By this Amendment, Applicants have cancelled claims 80-96, 103, 104, and 128-131 and have amended claims 98, 99, 107, 108, 111, 113, and 114. Claims 97-102 and 105-127 are currently pending in this application. Claims 97, 105, 106, and 115 are the sole independent claims.

While Applicants disagree with the Examiner's rejections, in order to expedite the prosecution of this application, Applicants have cancelled claims 80, 82, 84-96, 103, 104, and 128-131 and have amended claims 98, 99, 107, 108, 111, 113, and 114 to depend from one of allowed claims 97, 105, and 106. Moreover, due to these claim amendments, rejected claims 100-102, 109, and 110 now depend, either directly or indirectly, from one of allowed claims 97, 105, and 106. Accordingly, claims 98-102, 107-111, 113, and 114 are allowable at least due to their respective dependencies from allowed claims 97, 105, and 106.

Applicants further request the withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection of claim 83 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Platt '224 in view of Steffes and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,698,726 to Platt ("Platt '726"). Claim 83 has been cancelled by this Amendment, thereby rendering this rejection moot.

Applicants respectfully request that this Amendment After Final under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 be considered by the Examiner, placing the pending claims in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of any § 103(a) rejections relating to any of the pending claims and allowance of pending claims 97-102 and 105-127.

Applicants note that the Final Office Action contains several statements reflecting assertions about the pending claims and the cited references. Regardless of whether

any such statement is addressed specifically above, Applicants decline to subscribe to any assertion in the Final Office Action.

If a telephone interview will expedite issuance of this application, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned at (202) 408-4387 to discuss any remaining issues.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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